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WE SHALL NOT REST, REPORT ON OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH, BASED ON DISCUSSIONS AT THE SOUTHWIDE CONFERENCE ON OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION (ATLANTA, GA., APRIL 5-6, 1967).

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

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THE DISCUSSIONS, PRESENTATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF 125 BUSINESS EXECUTIVES, EDUCATORS, AND GOVERNMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES AT A CONFERENCE CONCERNING OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE SOUTH ARE SUMMARIZED. THE AREAS DISCUSSED ARE--(1) THE NEED FOR EDUCATION TO SUPPLY A WIDE SPECTRUM OF OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO ACQUIRE IMPORTANT SKILLS WHICH ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE LEARNED IN A TRADITIONAL 4-YEAR COLLEGE COURSE, (2) THE IMAGE AND STATUS OF OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION AND ITS IMPROVMENT BY PROVIDING QUALITY IN TECHNIQUES, EQUIPMENT, INSTRUCTION, STUDENTS, AND EMPLOYEES, (3) THE EDUCATIONAL REALITY OF WHAT HAPPENS TO THE NATION'S 80 PERCENT WHO DO NOT COMPLETE COLLEGE, (4) COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY TO PLAN CURRICULUMS, FORECAST SKILL NEEDS, CREATE DESIRABLE CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING, AND PURCHASE APPROPRIATE EQUIPMENT, AS WELL AS TO DEVELOP HEALTHY ATTITUDES, RESPONSIBILITY, LOYALTY, AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM, AND (5) ACCREDITATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO PROVIDE AN ASSOCIATION OF INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS DEDICATED TO OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION, LINKED THROUGH COMMON REALISTIC STANDARDS DEVELOPED BY THEMSELVES WITH BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION. (MM)

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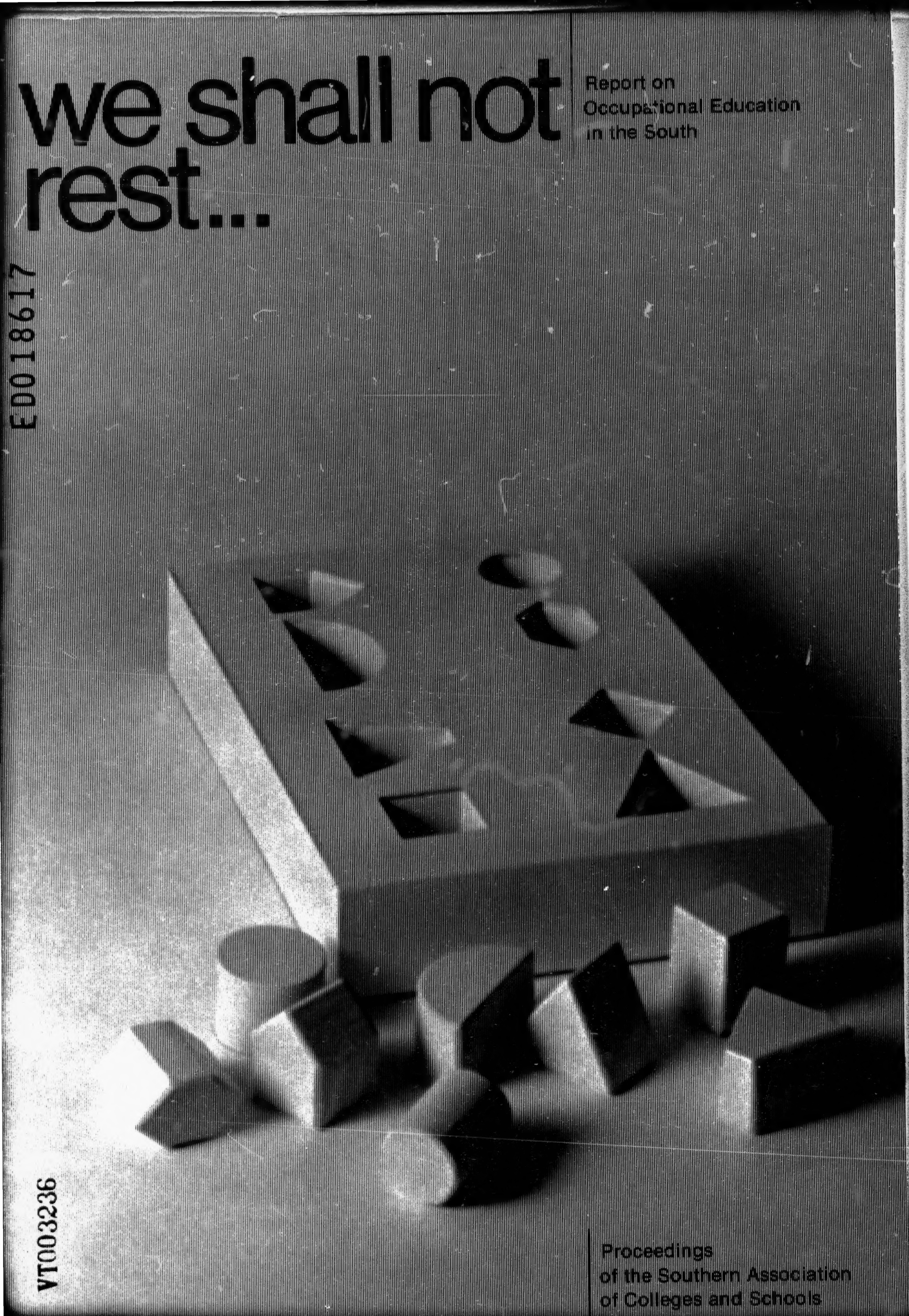
we shall not rest...

Report on
Occupational Education
in the South



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Proceedings
of the Southern Association
of Colleges and Schools

we shall not rest...

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Report on Occupational Education in the South Based on Discussions at the

SOUTHWIDE CONFERENCE ON OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

April 5-6, 1967
Riviera Motel
Atlanta, Georgia

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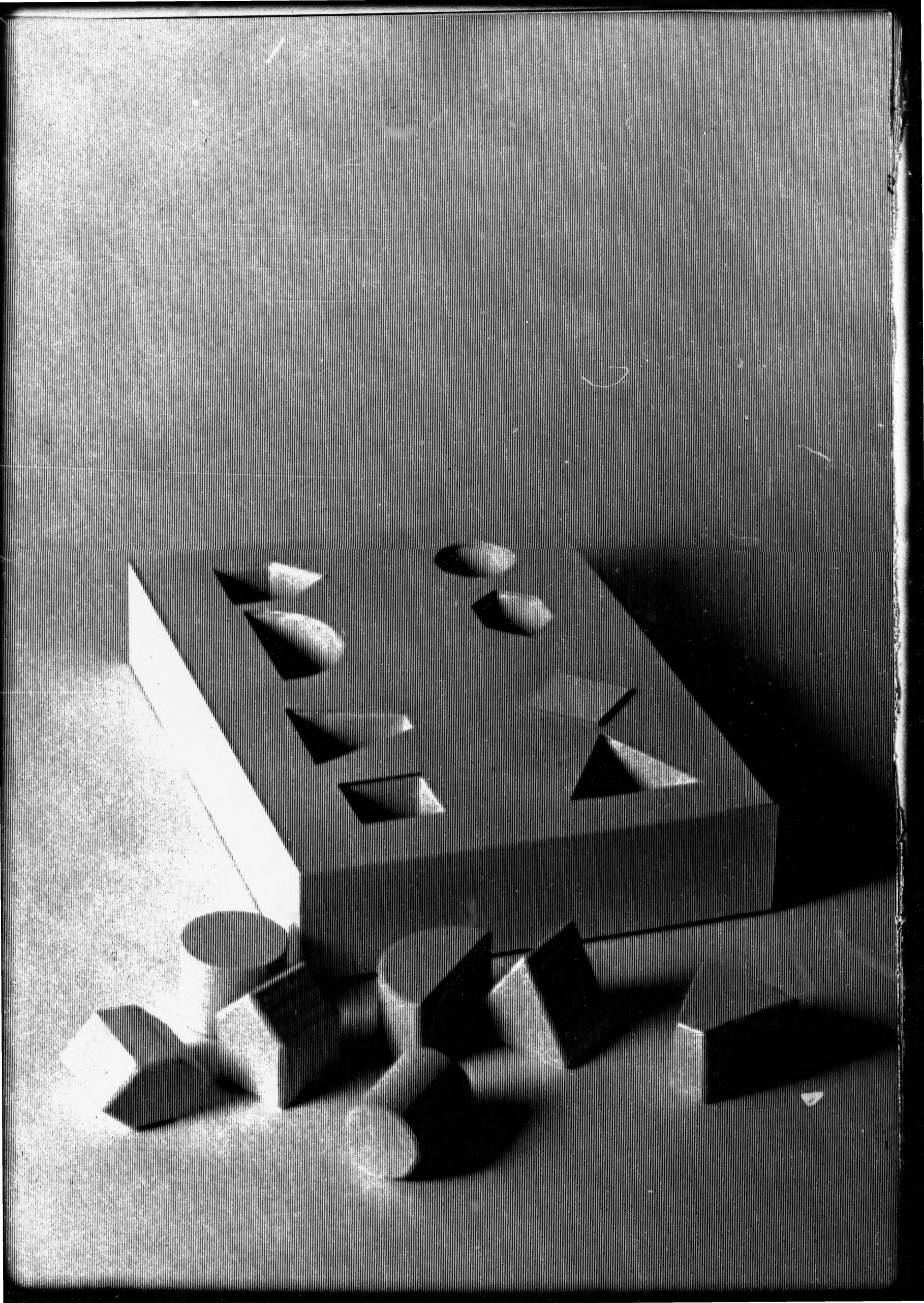


foreword

The South's total educational system must react and adjust quickly to the rapidly changing social, economic, and cultural scene if the region is to reach its maximum development. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, committed to using its procedures and influences to expand and improve educational opportunity, wishes to make full use of its resources in helping the Southern region capitalize on its vast potential.

Providing more and better quality education for the world of work is vital to the South and is of two-fold urgency: (1) Millions of Southerners are ill-prepared to seize existing employment opportunities, and (2) Business and industry must have an adequate force of well-trained tradesmen and technicians if the South's rapid economic development is to continue.

It was with a sense of deep commitment to increasing educational opportunity and to continued progress in our region and at the suggestion of the Commission on Colleges that the leadership of the Southern Association called the Southwide Conference on Occupational Education in Atlanta, Georgia, on April 5-6. As a foretaste of what promises to be a resourceful and vital partnership with the business world, two giants of Southern industry—Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company and The Southern Company and its operating affiliates, the Alabama, Georgia, Gulf, and Mississippi power companies—joined the Southern Association in the sponsorship of the Conference.

This report is a summary of the discussions, presentations, and recommendations of the Southwide Conference on Occupational Education. It is too brief to be inclusive in reporting the many ideas, recommendations, points of view, and criticisms expressed by the Conference participants. Consequently, it does not purport, necessarily, to be a consensus of the Conference discussions. Attribution in the narrative was considered neither feasible nor necessary. Similarly, the report borrows heavily from many of the major presentations. Its underlying purpose is to stimulate improvement and expansion of education for the world of work.

During the meeting, 125 invited business executives, educators, and governmental representatives participated in a frank discussion of occupational education and its importance to the South. The statement of a participating industrialist aptly assesses the success of the Conference: "This has been the finest exchange of ideas between businessmen and educators that I have ever experienced."

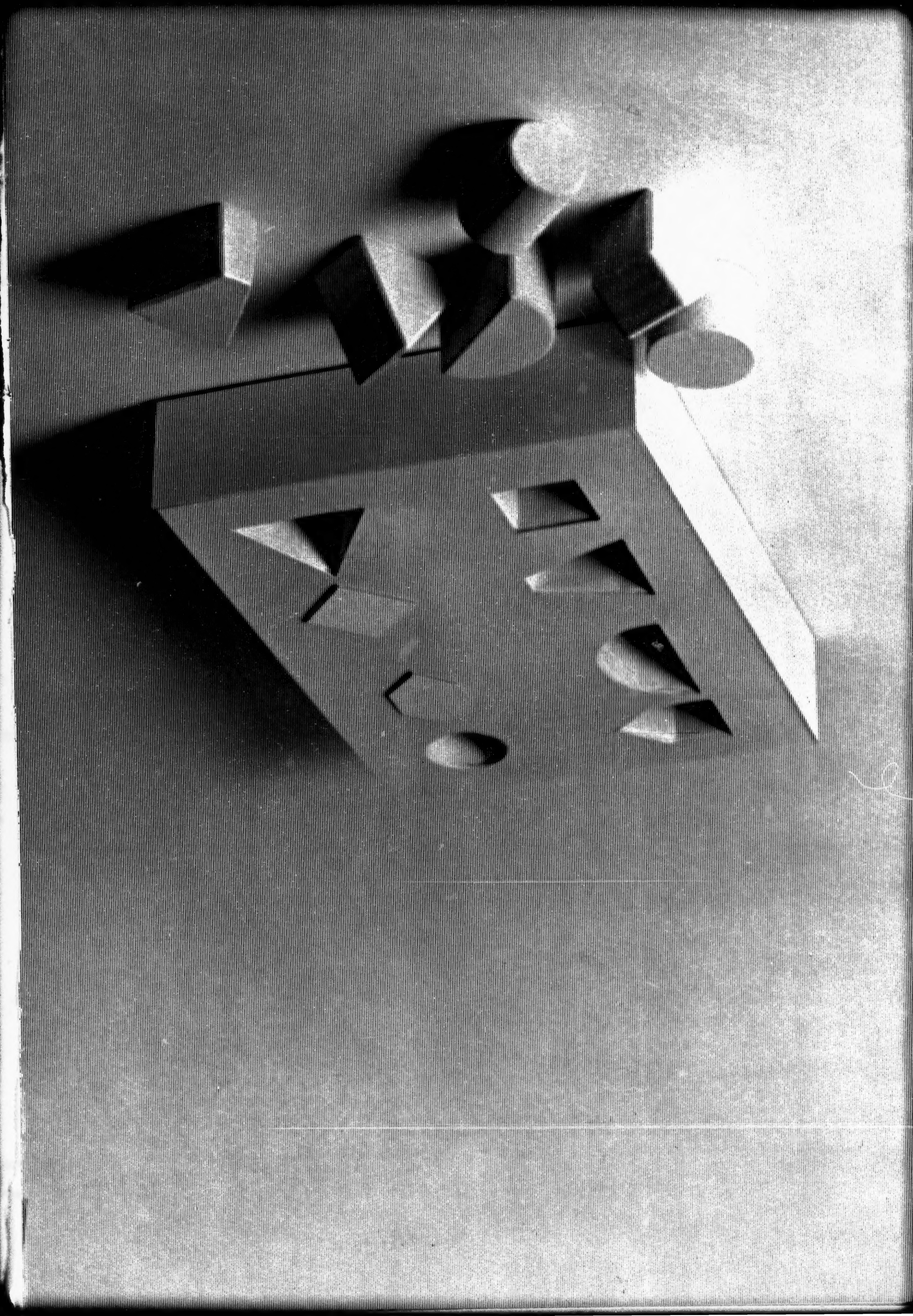
For the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Conference was both a beginning and end. It was the emphatic beginning of a greatly expanded interest in programs of occupational education and an end to the previous policy of giving attention to education for the world of work only if it were a part of a regular high school or junior college program. With the impetus gained through this Conference and with the cooperation of vocational educators, the Southern Association will look to the accreditation of institutions offering occupational education and other programs which are supportive of quality and expanding educational opportunity.

This summer a committee composed of vocational educators, business and industrial representatives, and Southern Association leaders will be appointed to study and suggest a role for SACS in occupational education. This proposal will be considered, and hopefully approved, by the Board of Trustees at the Association's annual meeting in Dallas, Texas, in November. This would enable an Association program in occupational education to become operative in 1968.

The Southern Association deeply appreciates the excellent cooperation of the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company, The Southern Company, the Southern Division of the National Association of Manufacturers, vocational education leaders, and all the participants who made the First Southwide Conference on Occupational Education possible and successful.

William L. Pressly

William L. Pressly, President
Southern Association of Colleges
and Schools; and President,
Westminster Schools, Atlanta, Georgia



we shall not rest...

...Until the vital work and services of the skilled craftsman, the technician, and the semi-skilled worker are accorded more importance and dignity.

...Until the education profession stops practicing a form of snob appeal that has oversold the value of college enrollment to the point where millions of youngsters, who cannot or should not go to college, view themselves—at age 16, 17, or 18—as failures.

...Until strong vocational programs are available to youngsters—numbered in the hundreds of thousands in the South—who need but do not now have access to them. These young people are on farms, in villages, and massed up in the ghettoes of our large cities.

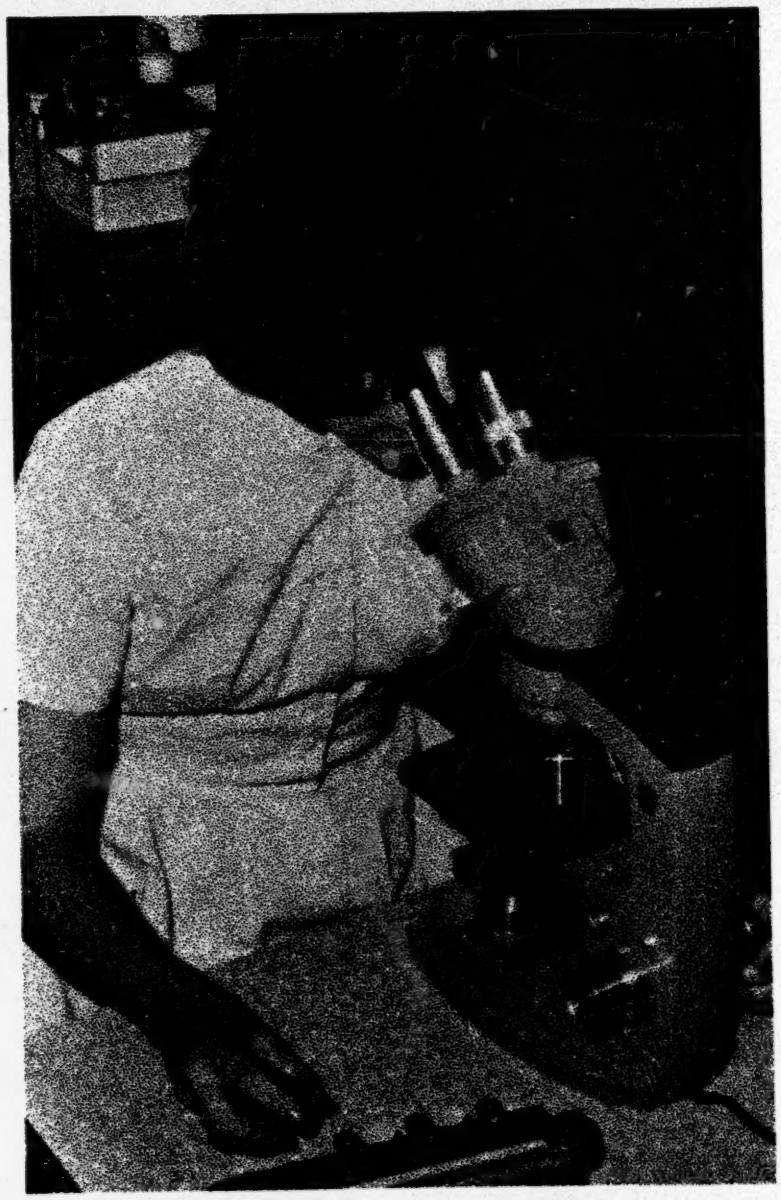
...Until any outdated courses of instruction have been supplanted by programs of occupational education relevant to our times and to the needs of business and industry and to the needs of individuals and our country.

...Until we achieve total concern for boys and girls, men and women, maintaining contact with these individuals until they are satisfactorily linked with the world of work.

...Until the Selective Service rejectees, the culturally deprived, and especially young Negroes, who represent a great human resource for the South, are given enriched and relevant vocational education.

...Until we have literally 'broken the back' of the dropout problem that denies so many potentially useful Southern youngsters a satisfactory career and a reasonable future.

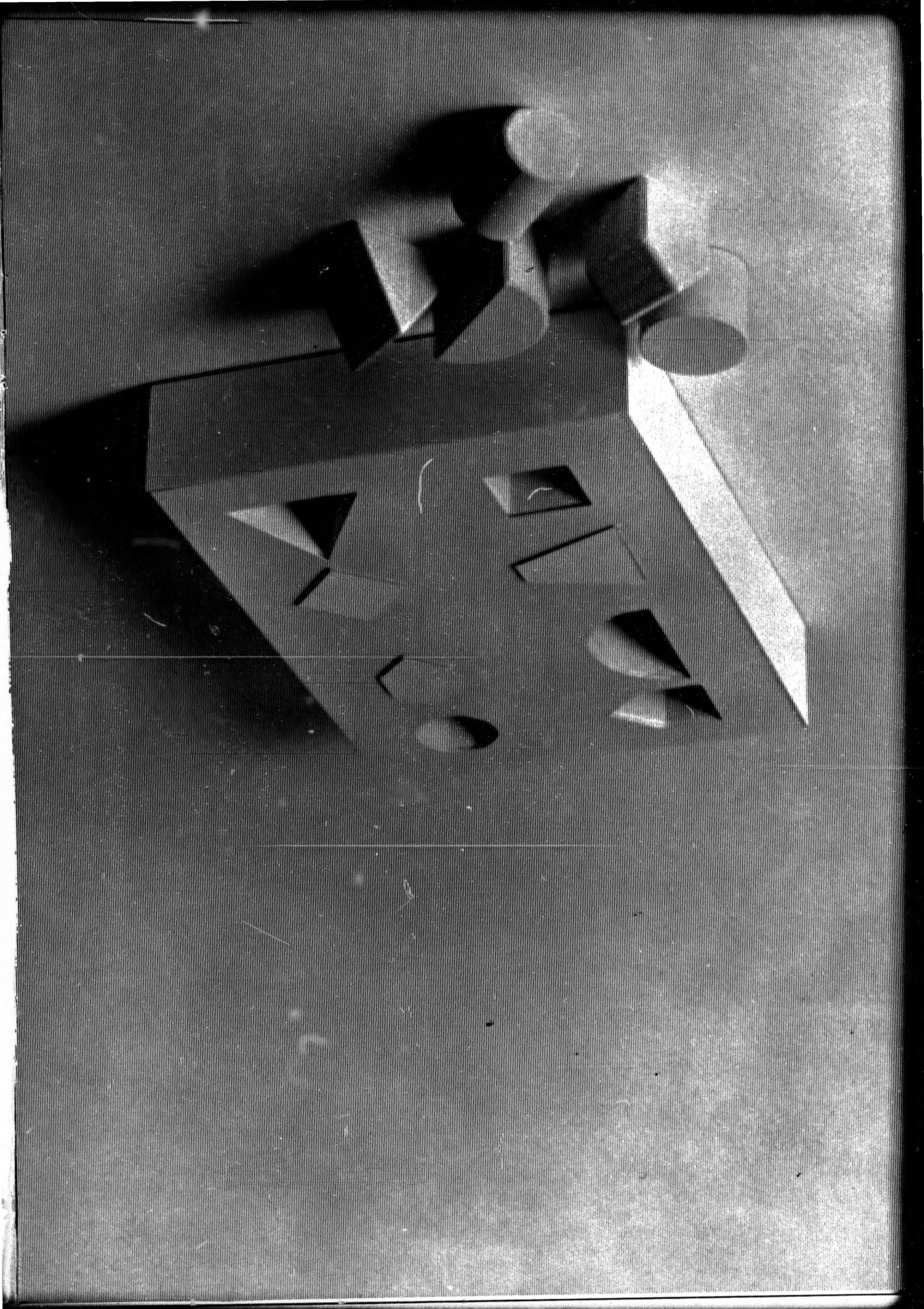
...Until the productive power and economy of the eleven Southern States served by the Southern Association have been dramatically improved, first reaching the national average in per capita income—and then, hopefully, combining our great natural and human resources in a magnificent effort to surge on beyond that first great goal: the national average.



...Until we have passed beyond the tired old cliches uttered every year on Business-Education Day to work out a new dimension and a new kind of genuine partnership between education and business, one that has educators pervasively working on the premise that business and industry are major partners, not junior partners, in the enterprise of preparation for the world of work. The stakes are too high to permit anything else.

Felix C. Robb, Director
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Atlanta, Georgia
April 5, 1967



changing needs

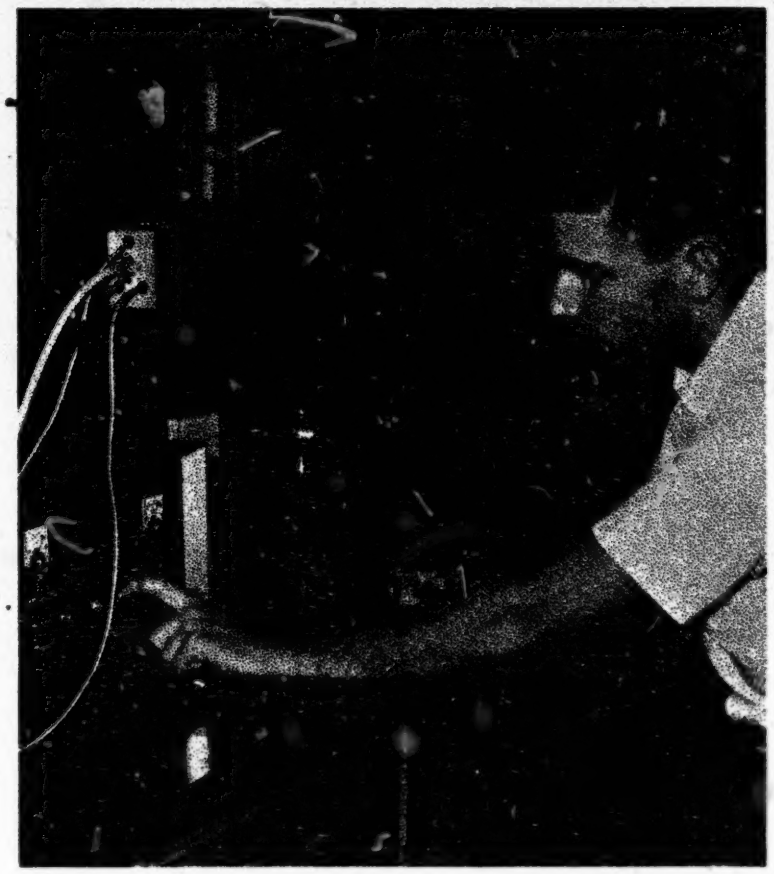
When the first settlers moved into the Southern region of the United States and their descendants pushed the wilderness back to the frontier of Western Kentucky and Tennessee, a classroom education was as utilitarian as a lace handkerchief. Both may have been admired occasionally, but they offered little help in driving a wagon, hacking out a farm from dense forest, bringing in a good crop, or fighting off an Indian war party. Where towns sprang up, however, schools flourished. As the ragged edges of pioneer hardship softened, settlers unpacked an important part of their Old World heritage—the belief that schooling was synonymous with the good life, success, social recognition, progress, and civilization.

For the children of pioneers and their children, an education was mainly the fundamentals, "the arts" of reading, writing and numbers. When agriculture and commerce brought prosperity, a few young men from plantations or the rising cities went abroad to study at European universities or at one of the new colleges in the young nation. They studied logic, classical languages, rhetoric, mathematics, and some of the sciences, mainly extensions of the "Three R's." For most Americans, however, the alternatives were illiteracy or a pinch of learning. Beyond the schoolhouse, the choice was greater for young men. Future wives and mothers had all they could do to learn through practice the skills of homemaking and rearing children.

Boys not following the footsteps of their farming or merchant fathers were usually apprenticed to tradesmen, a portion of the population swelling with the steady stream of immigrants. The world of work grew rapidly. In 1786, a Baltimore newspaper advertised this list of tradesmen among newly arriving indentured servants: "... Carpenters, Shoemakers, Coopers, Blacksmiths, Staymakers, Bookbinders, Clothiers, Diers, Butchers, Schoolmasters, Millwrights, and Labourers." Demands for skilled tradesmen far outstripped that for formal classroom training.

The rising public approach to education and training was to give the children the basics and somehow "life" would take care of the rest. In truth, it did. There was time and the supply of the relatively few skills required usually kept up with demand. Passage through the doorways to opportunity may have been slow, rigorous, and often haphazard, but it was uncomplicated when compared to the current maze of over 20,000 distinguishable occupations.

Today the computerized hum of industrial technology fills the air. It is the sound of incredible change penetrating the life of every American, speeding up his tempo from his innermost thoughts to his most public action. No feature of modern society has been affected more than the American's world of work. Industry and business are racing to keep up with the soaring demands for space-age hardware, modern equipment, and an endless number of new consumer items and services to meet the needs of a growing and increasingly prosperous citizenry.



Commerce at all levels has learned that its most important commodity is people, skilled and resourceful employees who make and sell the goods and perform the services. Classified advertisements in newspapers across the land and the long lists of clients in public and private employment offices are but two of many testimonials to the stark fact that the supply of adequately trained workers is far behind the demand. While employers make their public plea for highly skilled workmen, the thousands of Americans who annually join the payroll ranks are neither sufficient in numbers nor well enough trained.

The answer is not simply a matter of fitting the supply to meet the demand or of the thirsty man finding his way to the well. All the ramifications of unemployment, underemployment, and unemployability are involved. And these are only a few of the many forces operating in a radically changed and changing world, one of growing numbers and increasing complexity, one in which earthly horizons have pushed inward to the family TV screen while man's grasp reaches toward the edge of his galaxy and beyond. It is a world where man competes against man and a world which increasingly pits men against ideas.

In the world of work, each new idea may produce dozens of new skills which someone must learn. These skills generate other ideas from which will spring newer skills. As this multiplication continues, thousands of job categories are added. These have

included 3,100 new classifications since 1961. Business still has a need for laborers, handymen, maids, general office help, and semi-skilled workmen. But demand for such workers is declining while the rising demand for the highly skilled technician and semi-professional specialists begins to sound like an ultimatum from the U. S. economy.

Businessmen, along with public officials and other employers, more and more need specialists in electronics and in dozens of semi-professional engineering skills; men and women who know Boolean algebra (part of the new computer mathematics); medical technologists who can completely take over some of the non-professional and semi-professional duties now performed by doctors and nurses in health services, the nation's third largest "industry"; electro-mechanical technicians who can accompany industry's shift to inter-related skills; and technically oriented clerical employees who can master data processing and other complex equipment. On top of this, the Nation's industrial community needs men and women who not only can handle specific jobs but who can think, act and react in ways demanded by the fast-paced world of assembly-line, economy-minded manufacturing and service businesses.

Thousands of people have capability and training far below the minimums required for semi-skilled or skilled jobs. Many who can meet the standards for these jobs are working at other posts below their capacities. Still others, isolated in rural backwaters or trapped by the formidable barriers of urban slums, are unaware of awaiting opportunity. Some are denied access to the door of opportunity by racial prejudice, sex, or age.

Where is the army of skilled employees to be found? How is industry to recruit its needed thousands of highly trained personnel? Where will these thousands of individual human beings find the skills they need, not only to work but to fashion their own personal design of life, dignity, accomplishment, gain and contribution?

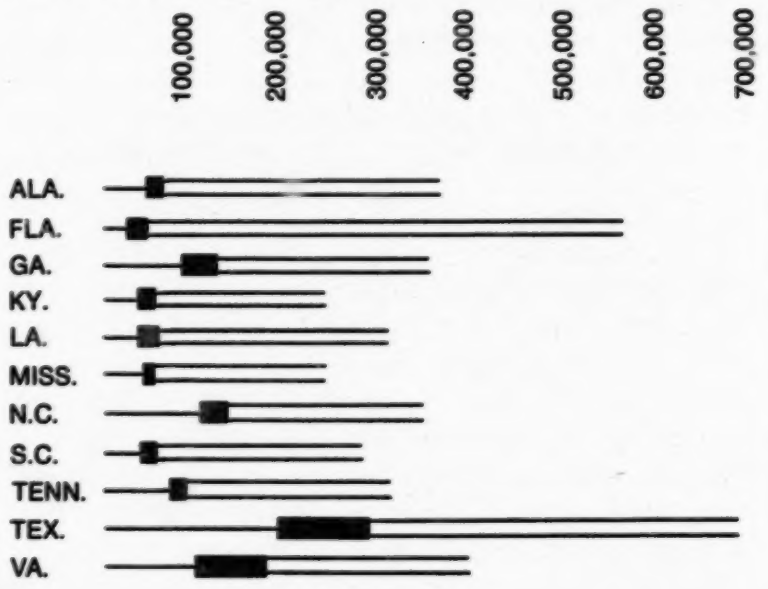
Business and industry are deeply committed to training their own in a manner and scope to meet particular needs. It is readily apparent, however, that the Nation's schools, always the basic manpower source for employers, must answer a new and increasingly heavier demand. The call is loud now but it may be a whisper compared with the high pitch it will reach in the future.

Educators, business leaders, and decision makers in large and small industry are saying that the crucial need for skilled employees and the growing shortages mean that *more and better vocational education* must be offered by schools in the United States. The proper role of preparation for the world of work in the Nation's mammoth education enterprise has always been too little recognized and understood. The needs of modern technology demand that this neglect be corrected.

Fifty years ago there were 164,000 students in federally assisted vocational programs in the United States. Little more than $3 million was spent for these programs. By mid-1967, an estimated $290 million in federal funds is expected to go into vocational education along with another $890 million in local and state money. In 1966, there were about 6,000,000 vocational education students in federally aided programs, but these are fewer than half of the estimated 14,000,000 persons forecast for enrollment by 1975.

In spite of the large increase in federal expenditures, the total amount spent for occupational education is estimated at only about two per cent of the total education budget in the Nation. The great majority of American students in grades 1-12 today are studying what is essentially a college-preparatory curriculum while only 20 per cent of them ever

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTH



ENROLLMENT IN FULL TIME PUBLIC SECONDARY DAY SCHOOLS ESTIMATED FOR FALL 1966—DIGEST OF EDUCATION STATISTICS, U. S. DEPT. OF HEW.

ENROLLMENT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS ESTIMATED FOR JULY 1966—THRU JUNE 1967—STATE REPORTS OF ENROLLMENT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL, U. S. DEPT. OF HEW.

ENROLLMENT IN AGRICULTURAL AND HOME ECONOMICS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS ESTIMATED FOR JULY 1966 THRU JUNE 1967—STATE REPORTS OF ENROLLMENT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, U. S. DEPT. OF HEW.

graduate from college. The other 80 per cent, whose futures somehow are closely tied to the world of work, need studies related to their goals. They need a wide spectrum of opportunity to acquire important skills which are not necessarily those learned in the traditional four-year course of earning a baccalaureate degree.

Because of this imbalance in education, school administrators, vocational educators and interested business leaders are increasingly alarmed when they consider present and future needs.

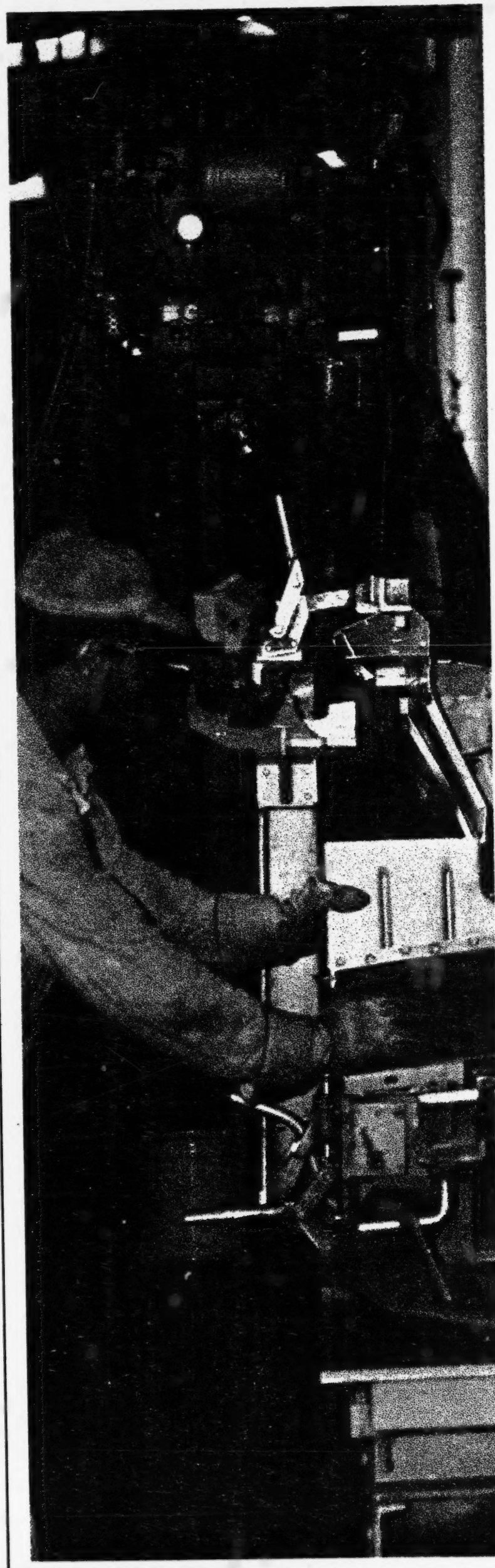
During the Southwide Conference on Occupational Education, common interests and goals were expressed by educators and leaders of business and industry. The thread running through all of the discussions was a sense of urgency to improve and expand education for the world of work. For millions of Southerners, improved occupational education will be the chief means for personal development and fulfillment, their best insurance against becoming, career-wise, proverbial "square pegs in round holes."

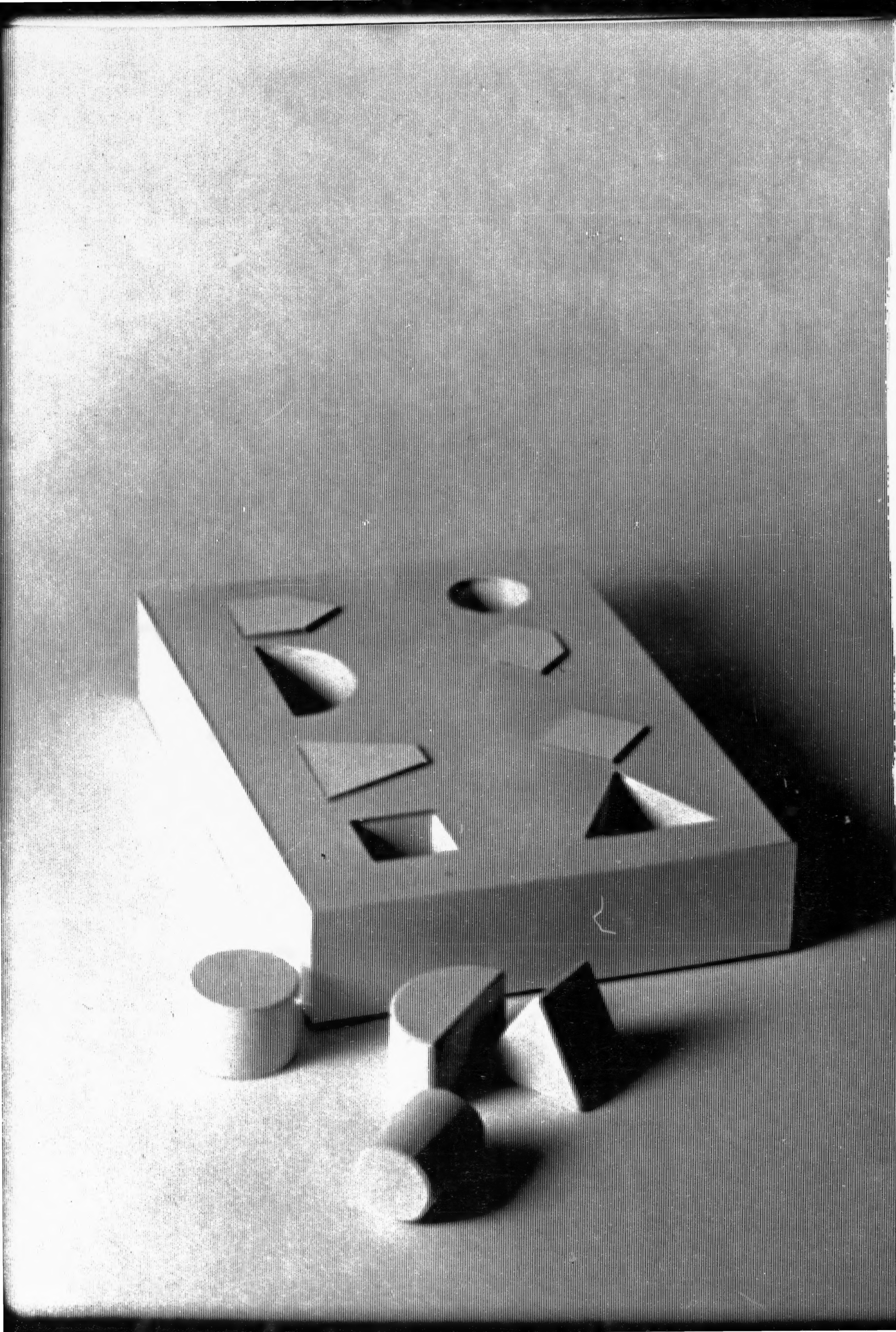
Problems and solutions debated appeared to be indigenous to the Nation as a whole but they carried a special importance for the South. The region is alive with the ferment of change from an agricultural way of life to an industrial and technical society. According to figures recently released by the U. S. Department of Commerce, employment in the South's plants and factories in a ten-year period has increased 27 per cent—in contrast with a rise of just 2 per cent in the rest of the Nation. Each day brings additional proof that the South is on the threshold of becoming a first-rate industrial area.

The South needs thousands of men and women to fill important new jobs, yet the region is supplying far below the needed numbers of trained personnel for its growing industries. Large numbers of culturally and economically disadvantaged people suffer from the double degradation of poverty and ignorance. These people of enormous latent potentiality represent a waste the South cannot afford.

Because of the hugeness and diversity of expanding job opportunities in the new South, representatives of business and education searched for ways to create a better and more accurate public image for vocational education, once relegated to the status of a "dumping ground." They explored new ways of communication between students, parents, faculty, administrators and employers. They debated the need for new goals, directions, unity and standards.

These last four were satellite topics to the subject most frequently discussed in the Conference — standards of quality, possibly leading to accreditation on a regional basis. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools received a proposal from Conference participants that it investigate the need for and feasibility of accrediting public and private non-profit post-secondary schools offering vocational education.





assessing image and status

The United States of America was founded and has thrived on vision and industry, yet many of its citizens hold a view that somehow most work—a job, a trade, a skill—is considerably less than noble and that those who must engage in it are acceptable and necessary but not models of the ideal.

While most Americans from pioneer days until now have been working people, many have cherished the dream of a kind of education that exempts individuals from work with their hands in favor of effort that is largely mental. Educational traditionalists have maintained a strong grip on the American curriculum—what it should accomplish, whom it should serve, and what should be taught. In their view, the only man thought educated is one who pursues either a classical program or some modern variation of the liberal arts. Most of the instructional energy and effort, from the first grade to the twelfth, seems aimed at preparing students for college. This is the American dream, a vision which limns the four-year college as the desirable goal for almost every student.

Because of this limited view of education a false stigma has been attached to training or education for skills which lead directly to employment. Consequently, many young people whose parents want "something better" for their children fail to seek and grasp training opportunities for a future both challenging and rewarding. The absence of what is called status in occupational education is recognized as a major obstacle to recruiting more American youth into expanding and fruitful areas of service.

Many Southern Negroes, striving for education and improvement, adopt similar attitudes based on outmoded assignments of prestige. They are impressed by the white man's traditional assessment of vocational education, tend to avoid it, and thus are not heavily enrolled in what could be their finest opportunity. Negro leaders have been known to act out the same delusion when they portray a bachelor's degree and the jobs which can be sought with it as the only course young Negroes with talent should take. Two newspapers of largely Negro readership recently published special issues designed to prevent high school dropouts and send teenagers to post-high school classrooms and on to good jobs. Both publications promoted the four-year college, ignoring all other types of education and jobs related to them.

As college-going grows more popular, more commonplace, it inevitably will lose elements of prestige based upon exclusiveness. Public perception of what kinds of education are, or are not, prestigeful are also being modified slowly by the career opportunities for technicians and other para-professional workers in science-based fields.

There is hope for a general shift in attitude toward vocational education and for elimination of artificial prestige in job hierarchies.

American colleges and universities will always be enormously important in the Nation's education system; but for many youths, the American dream may be only a hollow fantasy if they are repeatedly told, and are convinced, that college graduation is the one sure route to a bright future.

The academic influence in elementary and secondary schools is enormously valuable, and it should be made plain as glass clear that the blame for keeping occupational education from reaching its potential does not rest with academic educators alone. For example, the administration of a high school located in the middle of a "working man's neighborhood" wanted to shift from an academic curriculum to provide more vocational education for the large majority of its graduates who did not go on to college. Parents protested and eventually blocked the change. "We want our school to be just as good as_____across town," they said, referring to another high school in the middle class suburban area where 90 per cent of the secondary school graduates go on to college.

Aspiration for higher education is generally laudable, but too often parents who seek this course for their children are motivated basically by desire for social status. Such unfortunate worship of status demeans vocational training. When status and stigma become deeply linked and rooted, they adversely affect students, schools, faculties, administrators, and the general welfare of the Nation.

The older image of vocational education lingers, sustained by some public indifference and some hostility. Education as a necessity for economic and cultural progress has been accepted by the

American public but education for the world of work has been badly neglected. Educators and the general public must share the responsibility and cooperate to change the situation.

There have been no serious suggestions to overturn completely the American school system but there has been some urgent prodding to bring programs of studies into closer alignment with the real world which millions of youths must face. Behind these prods is the conviction that traditional high school and college are but two of many doors to opportunity, dignity, challenge, personal satisfaction and reward.

Out of every 100 children in public elementary schools in a large Southern city, only 14 graduate from college. Yet more than 90 per cent of all the students in that city's schools are in what is essentially a college-preparatory program. In all of Alabama, only seven of every 100 children graduate from college, a figure just a shade below the estimated average for the South. These figures indicate that something is basically wrong.

Elimination of what often amounts to scorn of education for work is not just a matter of replacing derision or securing faint praise from high levels. It will require a clear recognition of the value of diverse vocational programs and a better means of informing elementary and secondary school children about the merits, benefits, and requirements of various careers. In a word, we need dramatically improved career guidance.

One national association has proposed that vocational education be offered to half of the Nation's high school students instead of the present 15 per cent. A great surge in numbers of students and programs, however, will not necessarily result in a "good name" for all vocational education.

The best way to eradicate a bad image is to provide quality. More training of high quality is urgently needed and in many occupational education programs the word "quality" has become a seriously sought goal and a hallmark. If status is interpreted to mean attainment of a position of merit through the learning of challenging and crucially important skills and through superior performance, then thousands of vocational education students have already attained status, with thousands more on the brink of success. With a key role in an expanding industrial society, these young people are forming the new middle class of American technocracy.

A campaign to assure quality in techniques, equipment, instruction, students, and employees can reinforce public appreciation for occupational education programs throughout the South. Diversity of opportunity and the essential dignity of every career aspiration constitute an important message which will have to be communicated to the Nation. People must be persuaded that there is no aristocracy of occupations and that all things that are honorable and have to be done are worthy of being undertaken.

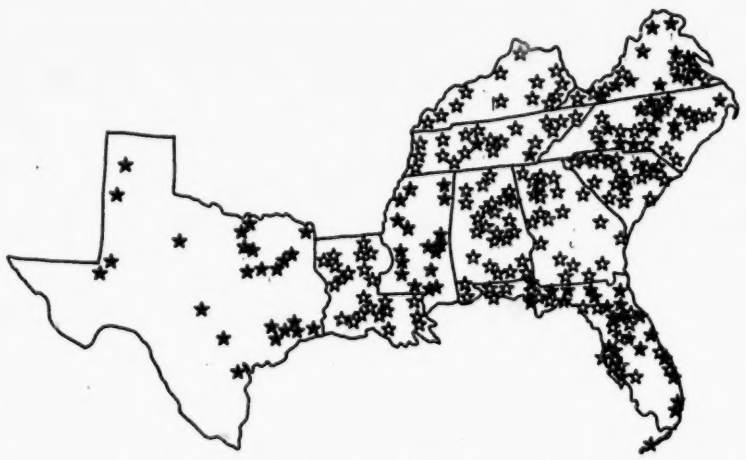
facing educational reality

If a scant 20 per cent of the Nation's high school graduates complete a four-year college program, what happens to the other 80 per cent, or the more than 90 per cent in many Southern school districts? What is to be the destiny of these individuals?

Many young people who attend college are not suited for that kind of education. Others do not attend, or do not even consider attending, because they cannot afford it, or have been poorly prepared, or are not aware of their own potential for college. The latter group is included in that great majority of today's high school students who will not graduate from a four-year college. They include the poor and the culturally deprived, the college dropout, the untrained, the undertrained, and the potential semi-professional employee with a quick talent for acquiring highly technical skills.

Some students will find their way into jobs which match their abilities and aspirations; others will be unemployed and trapped in poverty, working at jobs below their capacities. Still yearning for a glimpse of opportunity, they will be victims of an educational system which left them dangling between an aspiration for a college education and an opportunity for gainful employment. Unless there is significant change in current educational opportunity, this number will grow.

OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH
(REPORTED OPERATIVE APRIL 1, 1967)



☆ Area Vocational Schools and Technical Institutes (Non-Collegiate, Post High School)

★ Community Junior Colleges Offering Vocational Programs

Some prognosticators say that half of the population will be age 26 or younger in a few years. In the South, this would mean upwards of 25 million people in that age bracket. The Nation's educational and political leaders are not unaware of this shift toward youth or the need to provide adequate education for them. In addition to the swelling numbers of students and schools in grades 1-12 and in overflowing college classrooms there has been a boom in new types of training outside these categories. Local, state, federal and private agencies have provided a greatly expanding number of programs in junior colleges, vocational and technical institutes, continuing education centers for adults, classes provided by industry, on-the-job and work-study programs, apprenticeships, the Job Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, and others.

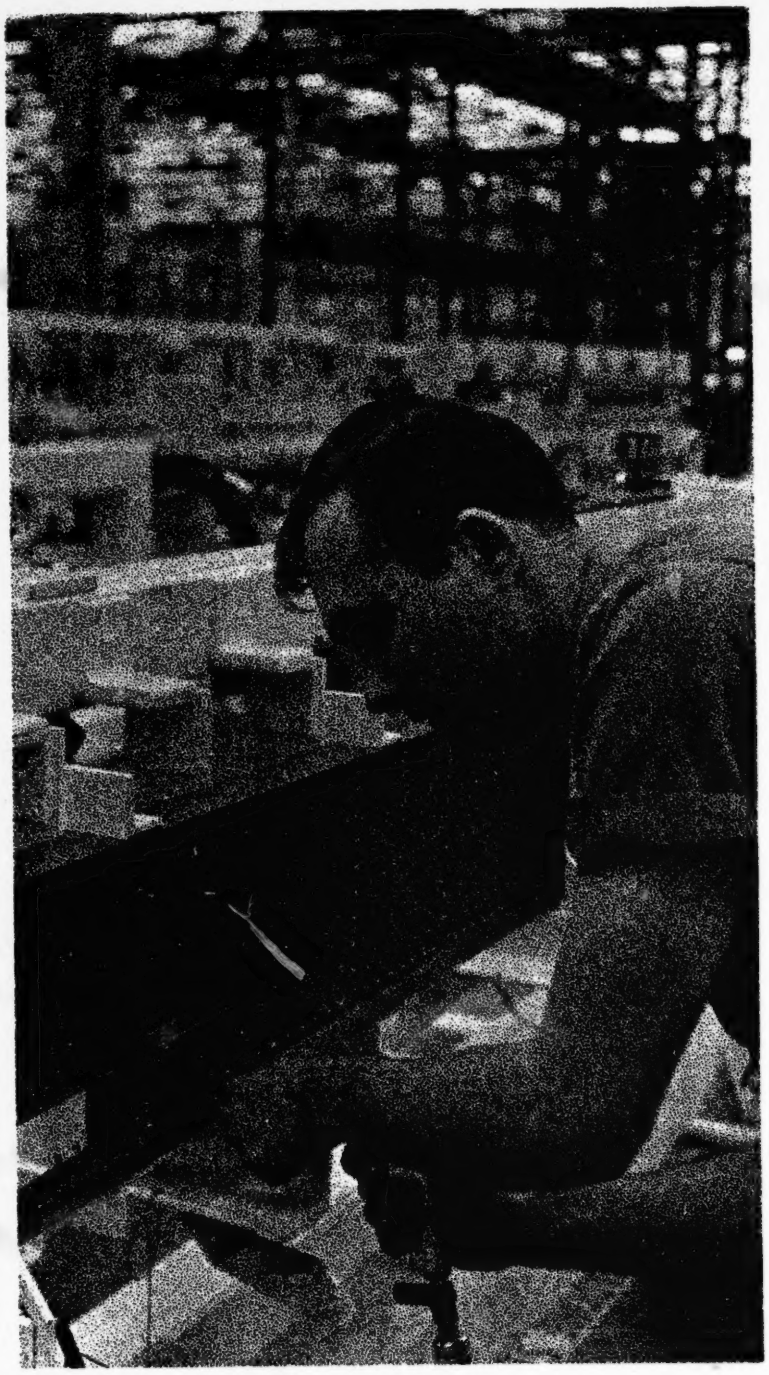
Two major movements are the state-sponsored, federally assisted area vocational schools and the junior colleges. By the summer of 1967, the number of area vocational schools is expected to grow to about 900, most of them offering a wide range of study including basic education, training for general service skills such as clerical, and special preparation in highly developed new fields such as chemical technology, computer programming, and electronics.

Two-year colleges, or community colleges, have surged into prominence. The community junior colleges are meeting an important need in the gap between high school and the four-year college. Their courses of study are in certain aspects similar to the post-high school vocational-technical institute but go beyond and into the more technical programs while still retaining much of the liberal arts flavor. They frequently offer the associate degree in semi-professional areas such as law enforcement, engineering technology, and medical technology. There are now about 800 community colleges in operation, most of them public institutions, with an estimated 1,150,000 students. An average of one new two-year college per week is opening throughout the country. Outstanding growth of these institutions is taking place in most of the Southern states.

This rapid growth in community junior colleges-technical institutes is expanding opportunity for post-high school education; but occupational education still suffers in comparison with the great need for more. Vocational training remains a small fraction of the entire American system. The 80 per cent of non-college graduates is the most compelling of all educational statistics. In the wise planning of programs for these millions may well lie the solutions to many of modern society's most critical and persistent problems.

The heavy demands of industry for more skilled employees, and the accompanying impact of this phenomenon on the schools, will not require a complete reversal of emphasis from the academic to the vocational, but will require some sharp changes. Leaders in all fields who face the problem most directly recognize the need for renovation and for a new unity and coherence among all types

and levels of education. Educational institutions must be in a position to smooth the transition between school and work and to eliminate the detours and outright barriers to students' successful employment and further education.



Of the 4.5 million students enrolled in federally-aided vocational programs in 1964, only about 27 per cent were involved in technical and industrial subjects such as electronics or machine repair. Nearly all the rest were in home economics and agriculture, despite the fact that the South is in the grip of a force which has made farms and farm communities decline in an era of growing cities and urban life.

The South is experiencing unprecedented industrial growth. With increased industrial employment has come an 89 per cent increase in personal income as compared with 69 per cent for the rest of the Nation. The region is the site of 40 per cent of the Nation's chemical industries and 80 per cent of the petrochemical industries. Growth is rapid in many other industries. Yet the South is still far below the rest of the Nation's economic level, still has a serious unemployment problem, and still has many desperately poor people.

Progress in the South has brought with it a tacit, inescapable contract with the future, a commitment to accelerate the pace of education for all its people. Part of the contract includes a heavy obligation to provide new echelons of skilled workers from the ranks of school-age youth, from the unschooled and unskilled, and from the many undertrained adults already in the work force.

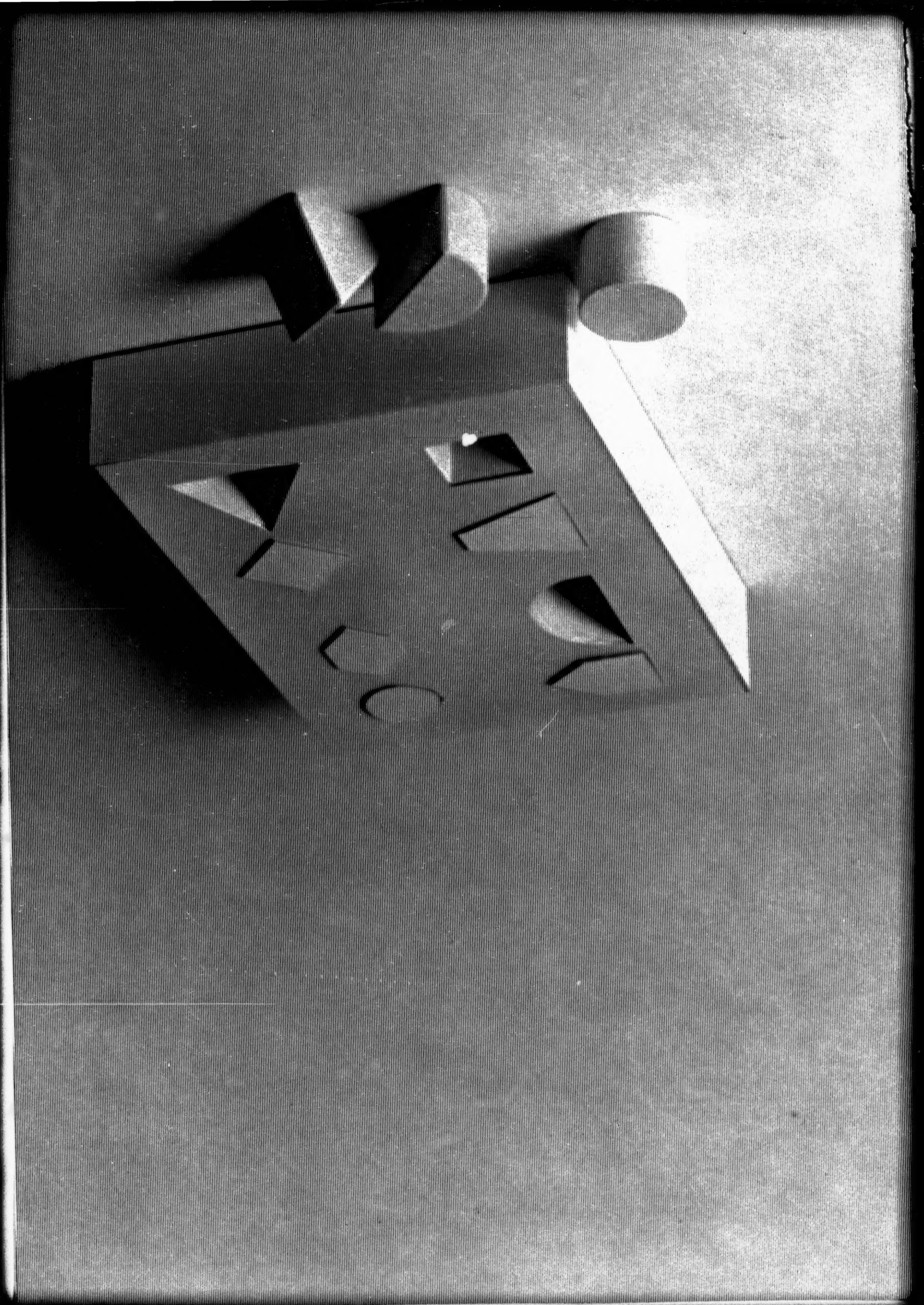
All signs point to the important role of the public and private schools in the South in honoring the contract and in meeting the commitment to the future through more diversified education. One of the most frequently espoused ideals in modern education is the helping of each child to realize his own maximum personal potential, helping him to set goals worthy of his abilities. If this ideal is to be brought to fruition, wide diversity of educational opportunity and the encouragement of students to take advantage of these programs is a necessity. A recent study by George Peabody College for Teachers reveals the necessary starting point: 59 per cent of Southern high school students attend schools where no vocational training is offered.

Any attempt to provide adequate job-oriented education must recognize the nature of rapid technological change along with the numbers problem and the high mobility of contemporary American families. Years ago, a student could be taught a vocational skill needed in his locality and rest assured he was set for life. This is no longer true. Students today must be prepared to adapt readily to at least two or three occupational changes and no fewer than six or eight geographic shifts in a lifetime. Advances in science, in technology, and management techniques will keep the job market and the vocational school curriculum in a continual flux.

These conditions are forcing occupational education into new models, new systems, new techniques. Stretching the vocational school year to 12 months, merging instruction in two or more related skills, and dividing students' time between academically oriented high schools and nearby or contiguous vocational campuses may be required. Schools will have new and growing responsibility for adult in-service training and retraining as well as for the training of youngsters for initial job entry.

The delicate balance between general education and training for specific technical skills will have to be achieved. Liberal education and vocational education are both essential aspects of preparation for learning, earning, and living. They need not be hostile or mutually exclusive enterprises. Both have value and a rightful place in the curriculum. The occupational educator is working in the individual as well as the regional and national interest when he takes the initiative to bring about this balance.

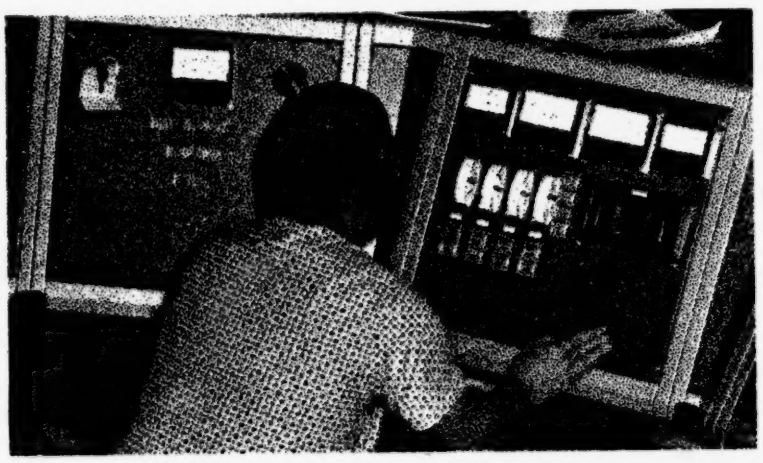
Every school system of the South must gear itself to provide an adequate program of education to meet the needs of all of its students. No student should be given a built-in handicap at the starting line in life because of grossly inferior instruction. Nor should he ever be abandoned or discharged from the system of formal education until he is prepared to enter gainful employment as a contributing member of a community.



communicating and cooperating

While many Americans tremble with excitement at the dramatic unfolding of the atomic and space age, it is even more an age of communication—an age of electronic and printed media—deeply imbedded in human emotions and attached to daily lives. In a time when the world is revealed on a screen in the family living room this question is being asked: Is vocational education, which embraces the skills of communication, failing to practice good communication?

Even if vocational education is now practicing moderately good communication, mediocrity will not suffice. In the future, vocational education will become the effective and beneficial instrument it is capable of being only if there is almost day-to-day communication between business, industry and education. The benefits and potential of occupational education must be communicated to the local, state, regional and national community. They must be told fully to students along with the classroom instruction. The message must reach parents and faculty, both those in vocational education and in academic programs.



If the business-industrial segment of the Nation and the schools are to help each other—and their futures are inextricably related—each must communicate its needs and problems to the other.

Business-industry leaders and educators are urging that business and education keep in close contact with each other, particularly in the field of occupational education. They are asking that industrial representatives participate more and more meaningfully as lay advisors to vocational-technical schools, that industry and business talk directly to the staffs of individual schools to communicate their needs in specific skills and number of employees needed, and that the business world project, as accurately as possible, and communicate in detail its future needs.

A few educators see dangers ahead and fear that advisory boards might become pressure groups, skewing institutional instructional programs. This is not the general view, however. Vocational educators are increasingly seeking the cooperation and help of employers without reluctance or timidity. Unless educators join forces with business and industry to plan the curriculum, to forecast skill needs, to create desirable conditions for learning, and to purchase appropriate equipment, occupational education will be less than adequate.

Most vocational educators see their task as being broader than supplying only saleable skills; they want their students to be well prepared for the society in which they will live as well as for the factory in which they may work. Likewise, enlightened businessmen espouse this objective and are increasingly concerned about their corporate responsibility for the quality of life in the surrounding community.

Southern citizens, from the smallest hamlet to the largest city, will have to be better informed about the role of vocational education in the total school system, its benefits to the economy and cultural life of the community, its role in the building of the United States and in the achievement of National goals, and the wide range of challenging opportunity it holds for individuals.

Students are in acute need of accurate career information and energetic communication from those who are supposed to counsel and guide. Students too often have misconceptions about their future, about their own education, and about the society in which they must some day work. These misconceptions can be minimized by effective counseling, a function still grossly underemphasized in all branches of education. The development of a superb system of career guidance, linked effectively to national and regional sources of up-to-date information about all aspects of jobs and employment, can eliminate one of Southern education's chief barriers to individual fulfillment and to the meeting of the South's pressing manpower needs.

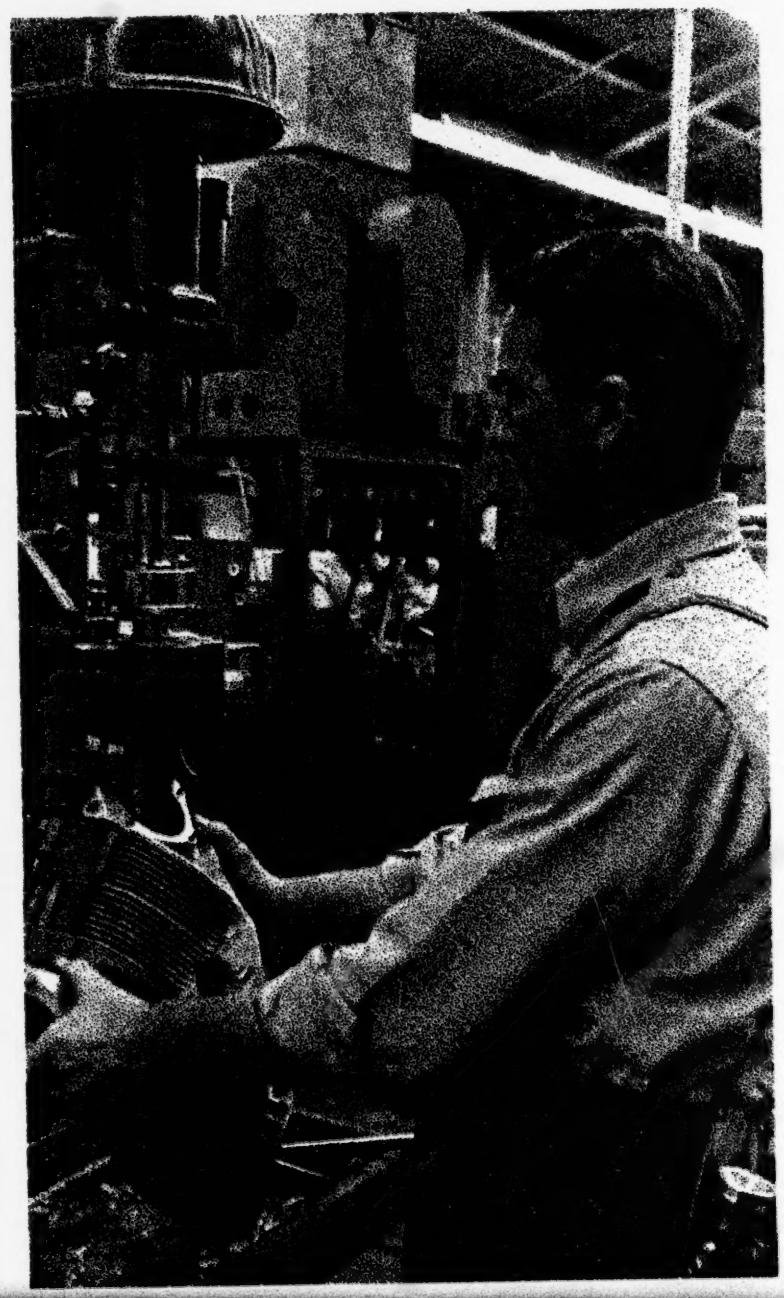
Businessmen also say that schools need to communicate to students something not generally found in text books, something that can be imparted only by a competent, enthusiastic, dedicated teacher. That something is in the realm of values: the personal desire for continual self-improvement, willingness to assume responsibility, and a fierce affinity for constructive action and vigorous work.

An industrialist, in defining what he expects from the educational halls, put it this way: "First, a well-trained, skilled person, but one who has acquired healthy attitudes, a sense of responsibility and loyalty, and a fair understanding of our economic system. I don't think we are asking too much."

accrediting vocational education

Vocational education is not yet a totally organized, smoothly running "machine". It is still a congeries of components—like sheets of steel, some strong, some weak; strands of electric conduit; delicate instruments; volatile fuel; and some unknown fragments yet to be blended into a single vehicle bound for the world of work.

While many of its separate parts have made great strides, the vocational movement has yet to achieve an overall unity of purpose, design, and program. This unity may be difficult to achieve because of the great diversity of occupations and of preparing institutions and agencies: community colleges, area vocational schools, comprehensive high schools, adult education programs, profit-making proprietary schools, federally financed anti-poverty agencies, and other facets of training and re-training for occupations. There are compelling reasons, however, why the South must strive for greater unity of thought and goals for vocational education and press toward its more complete harmony and articulation with the entire educational enterprise.



Accreditation is a proven source of strength and unity among educational institutions. But is it truly needed in post-high school vocational education? Would it succeed? How might it be organized and how could it function? Currents of debate on these questions run in all directions, including some dissent and some words of caution; but the feeling among most educators and businessmen who participated in the April 5-6 Southwide Conference is that accreditation is a needed avenue to improvement.

Accreditation is a strategy, a way of working—not a magic word. It could provide an association of institutions and programs dedicated to occupational education, linked through their own common, realistic standards developed by themselves with the cooperation of business and industry.

These standards would possess their own integrity and would be judged on their own merit. They would vary in some particulars from the standards of traditional high schools and junior colleges. They would be different from, not lower than, existing standards for the long-accredited types of institutions.

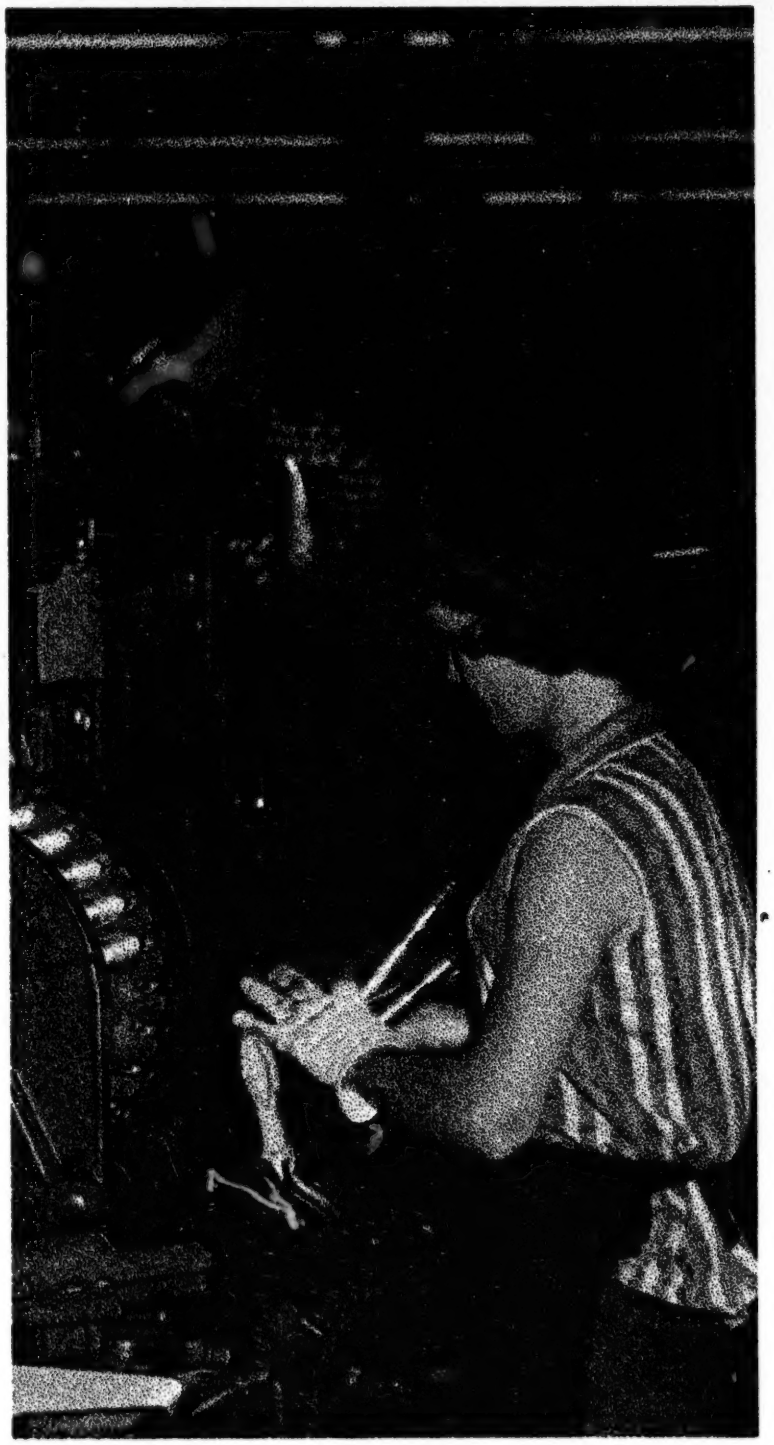
So rapid is the rate of change in the modern world that what is standard and adequate today may be archaic tomorrow. What is quality next month, may be shoddy performance next year. The fact presented in today's school may be supplanted by new knowledge to be imparted in a school of tomorrow.

Vocational schools in particular are in the mainstream of change and should be sensitive to it. Some fear that accreditation would lessen this sensitivity, bring rigidity, and create conflict between the needs of business and industry, on the one hand, and the standards of an accrediting association, on the other. Vocational education has had little experience with accreditation and existing accrediting agencies have had little experience with vocational education. Therefore, there is a tendency for each to view the other with a wary eye.

Those experienced in accreditation are quick to point out that standards are not unalterably fixed, that minimum standards do not mean conformity, and that there is a direct correlation between flexibility in accreditation standards and procedures and flexibility in the institutions comprising an association's membership. To this they add that the basic purpose of accreditation is to assure quality in education.

Officials of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools emphasize that accreditation of vocational schools and programs would be successful only if individual institutions practice rigorous self-evaluation and self-improvement. Much that is good and needed could be accomplished outside the realm of accreditation by cooperating, affiliated institutions and their leaders. Within accreditation there is an obligation for each school first to clarify its objectives, then to judge itself candidly in the light of those objectives and finally to develop beyond minimum standards set by accreditation. In this manner, the processes of accreditation provide the framework of quality control and encourage continuous improvement.

Accreditation is attractive because it means prestige, acceptance, status, and a yardstick for the "consumer". But both businessmen and schoolmen wisely warn that accreditation per se, or the stamp of approval, must not become the overriding objective of vocational education. Business-industry representatives are concerned that standards



be designed to serve the needs of business and industry as well as the needs of the educational system.

Any approach to accreditation of post-high school vocational-technical education should include ways to organize and coordinate the effort, means to encourage innovation, provision for flexibility without chaotic permissiveness, and common denominators for measuring quality. Beyond these broad areas, many specifics such as faculty qualifications, methodology, extent of skill-teaching, etc., would have to be determined.

Accreditation goes far beyond the setting of stand-

ards and even beyond serving individuals and corporations. It is imperative that accrediting be viewed not only as a function protecting the quality, freedom and integrity of an institution and its programs, but also as a vehicle to serve the welfare of the Nation, the individual worker, and the consumer of industry's products.

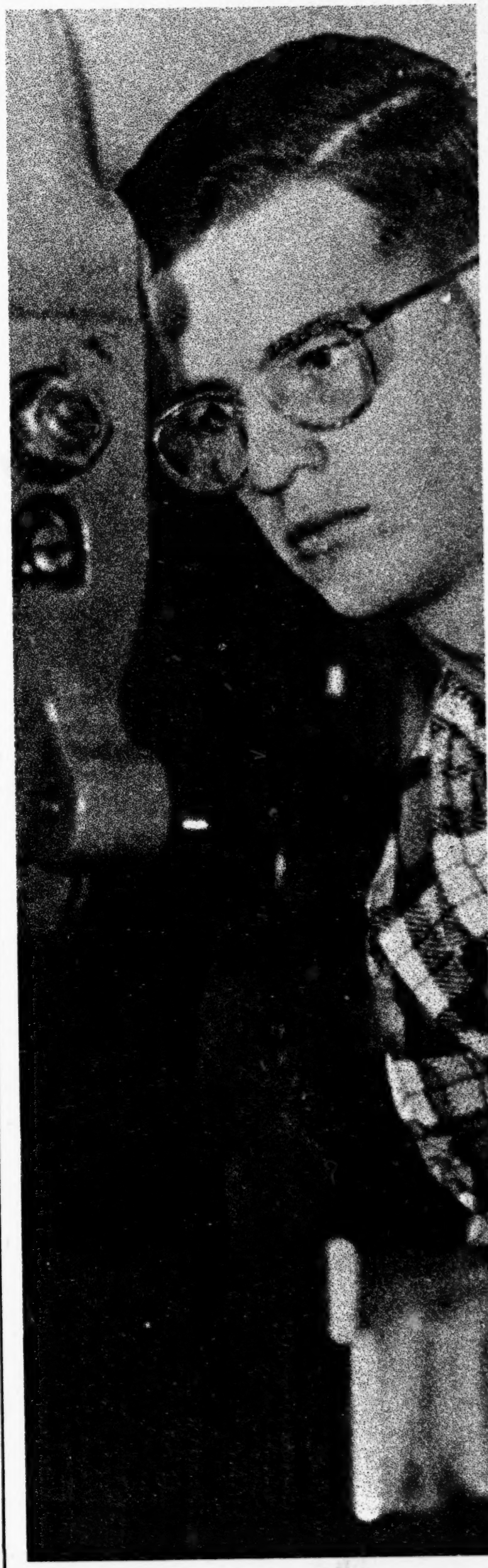
What timetable is desirable for possible accreditation in vocational education? Is there urgency about it? Normally the time required from initial exploration to a fully developed system of accreditation in a new field is from ten to fifteen years. Accreditation of occupational education in the United States will not be privileged to enjoy such a leisurely development, regionally or otherwise. Immediate action and rapid development are needed, with a regional model to be created within two or three years and national coverage to be achieved within five years at the outside.

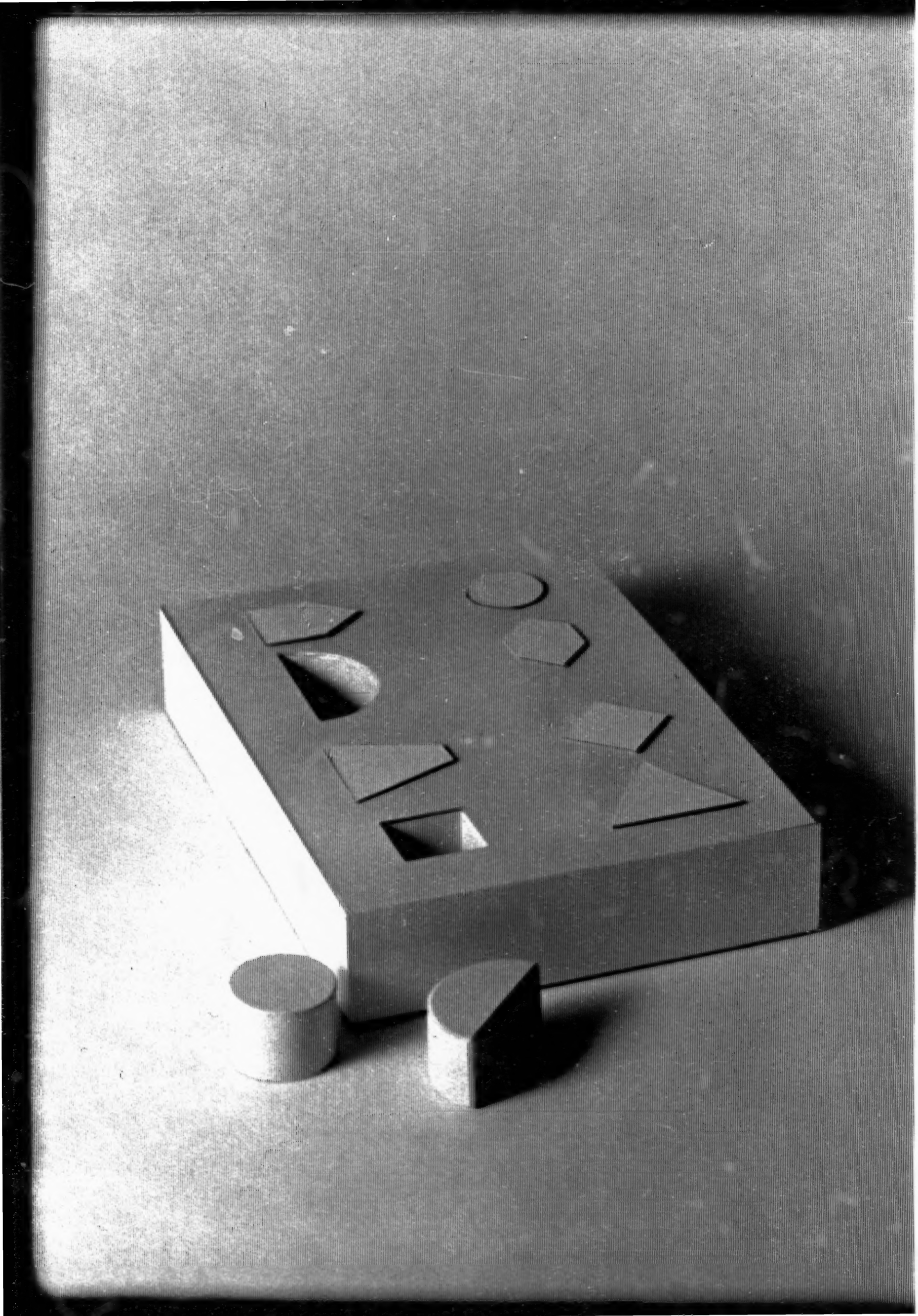
What is the most probable alternative to regionally oriented voluntary accreditation by an association of educational institutions? If post-secondary noncollegiate education is not included in the scope of voluntary standard-setting and implementation on a regional basis, the present "vacuum" probably will be filled by governmentally controlled, centralized accrediting. Already, Congressional requirements that students receiving federally supported scholarships in vocational programs attend institutions "accredited by nationally recognized accrediting agencies" and the absence of such agencies have put the funding unit, the U.S. Office of Education, at least temporarily into a form of accrediting.

The educational profession must not default in its responsibility to vocational education for standards-setting and quality determination in the uniquely voluntary and professional American pattern. Nor is it sufficient for one or two regional organizations to create the needed machinery. The U. S. Office of Education administers its programs nationally and, therefore, national coverage must ultimately be assured through the participation of all six regional associations.

The Executive Committee of the National Commission on Accrediting has urged the regional accrediting associations to "give full consideration to the possibility of developing appropriate organizational machinery in order to make it possible for these post-secondary institutions (with their variety of special programs) to be included in the regional (institutional) scheme of accreditation."

Because the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has given evidence that it intends to serve the widest possible spectrum of education (e.g., its recent pioneering advance into the accreditation of elementary schools), it would seem to be in the interest of the South and the Nation for the Association to create a model which would demonstrate the feasibility of regional accrediting in technical and vocational education. A start has to be made somewhere and nowhere is the need more imperative than in the South.





an agenda

Several years from now, participants in the South-wide Conference on Occupational Education may look upon the decade of the 1960's as the era when vocational-technical education began to blossom into full maturity, when it began to take on a distinctive form and have wider acceptance.

Occupational education prophets are at an extraordinary disadvantage. The new technology, certain to be a powerful and demanding influence upon occupational educators, may only be emerging. The difference between the technology of the sixties and the technology of the nineties may be as different as the Wright brothers' first airplane flight at Kitty Hawk and a manned flight to the moon. In fact, planning too far ahead in occupational education may not be feasible or wise because of the rapid changes that are sure to come.

The beclouded needs of decades ahead, however, must not inhibit planning for the immediate future or deter finding solutions to current problems. Existing problems represent a formidable agenda for occupational educators and will tax all available resources and know-how. The knotty issues are many and varied. In summary, four appear to be most pressing and to deserve the prompt attention of institutions and agencies.

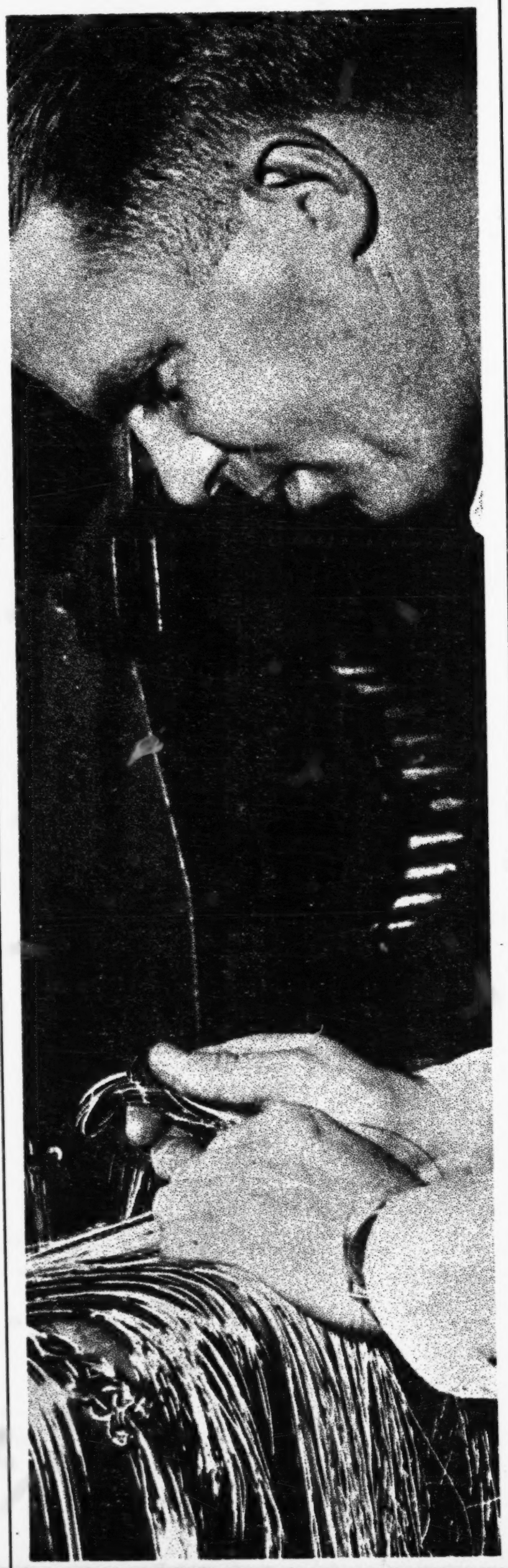
CHANGING THE IMAGE

Through a variety of ways—basic improvement in the quality of institutions, better public information, improved guidance and counseling—more young people must be convinced that the world of work requiring skills gained in programs of occupational education is important and can be useful, satisfying, even exciting, and that the baccalaureate degree is not the only respectable and appropriate route to a successful, fulfilling, rewarding career.

ACHIEVING AN IDENTITY

Occupational preparation, unlike its sister branches of education, does not conform to established patterns, standardized prerequisites for enrollment, length of study, widely recognized diplomas or degrees and systematized institutional arrangements. The absence of these factors has contributed to the lack of a clear identity for occupational education as the vital part of American education which it is. This identity is needed as occupational education struggles to meet growing manpower needs.

It would appear that voluntary accreditation and its ancillary activities which have served other aspects of American education so well could be useful in creating a more meaningful design and unity of purpose for vocational-technical education. Expertly used, the primary tools of accreditation—institutional self-study and evaluation—can be the means by which greater confidence in programs of occupational education can be achieved.



PROVIDING ADEQUATE MANPOWER

The growing manpower needs of Southern business, industry, and other areas of vital community activity such as health services are not being met by current educational programs. At the present rate, the gap is almost certain to become wider as demands grow in the years ahead. Without dramatic improvement in the productive capacity of occupational education, the South's forward progress will be stymied and essential services will deteriorate.

Educational planners must take a new and crucial look at employment opportunities available to students and reshape educational programs accordingly. In many cases a departure from the traditional and the accepted will be necessary. Education for the world of work will require the highest priority if the South's manpower needs are to be met.

FORMING THE PARTNERSHIP

The business and industrial community has a great stake in more technical and vocational education of higher quality. If skilled manpower is not available, business and industry must train it. Business and industry leaders have demonstrated their willingness to cooperate fully with occupational educators through a variety of means. Without the assistance of business and industry, occupational education programs will be less than adequate.

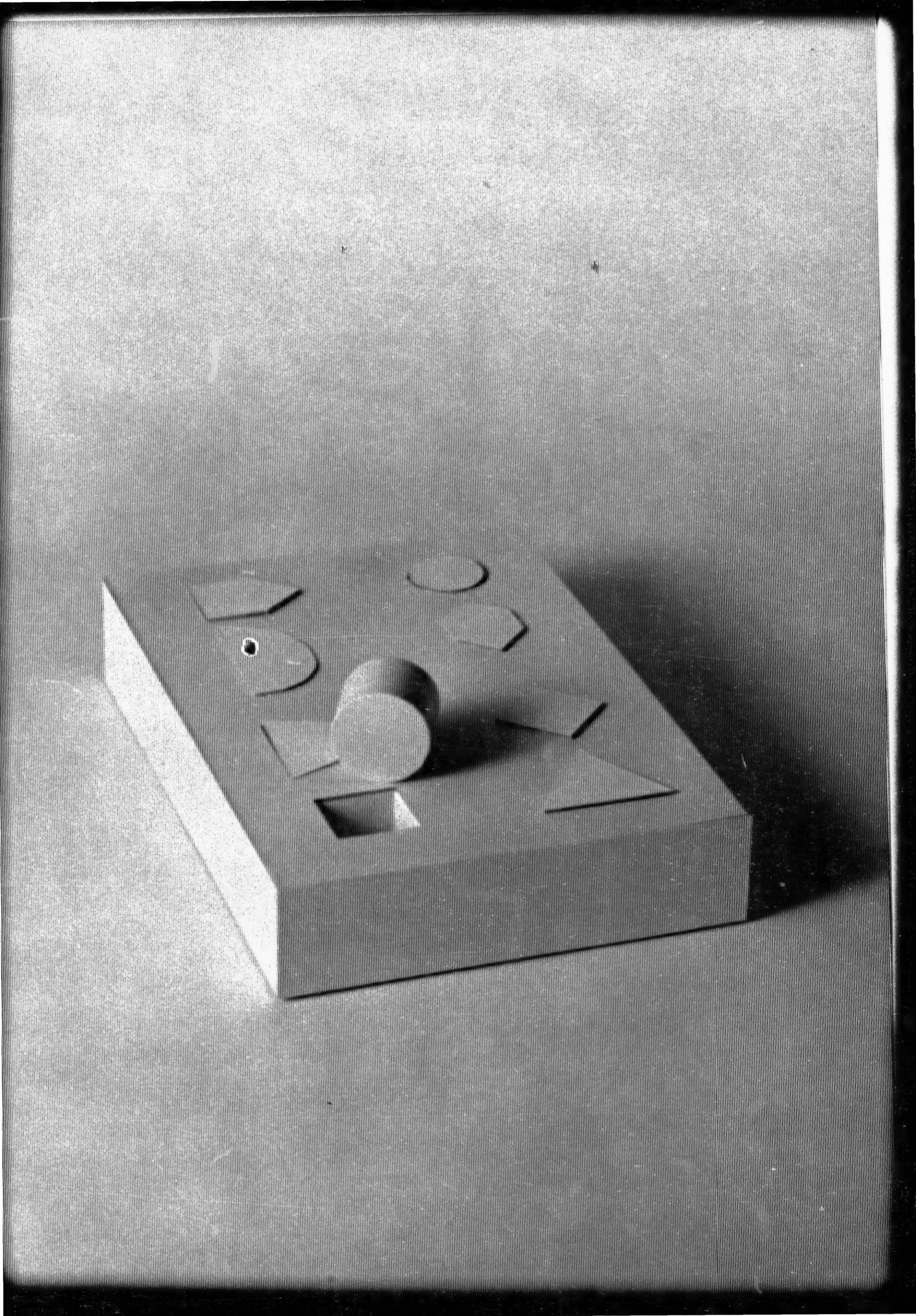
Cementing a viable relationship between business, government, labor, and education will be helpful to all, but it is quintessential for the South's people whom occupational education serves and whom business and industry employ.

LOOKING AHEAD

We of the South cherish our American heritage and realize that we do not have unlimited time in which to get our own house in order. High on the list of priorities is the improvement of our educational system and the elimination of its well known weaknesses that deny millions of young people a fair chance in life.

The greatest unmet need and the largest opportunity to enhance the quality of life for all the South's people now appears to be a vastly expanded, strengthened system of occupational education geared to modern technology and to the problems of urban, suburban, and rural living.

To this end the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools pledges its continuing interest and effort. Until this achievement is assured, we shall not rest.



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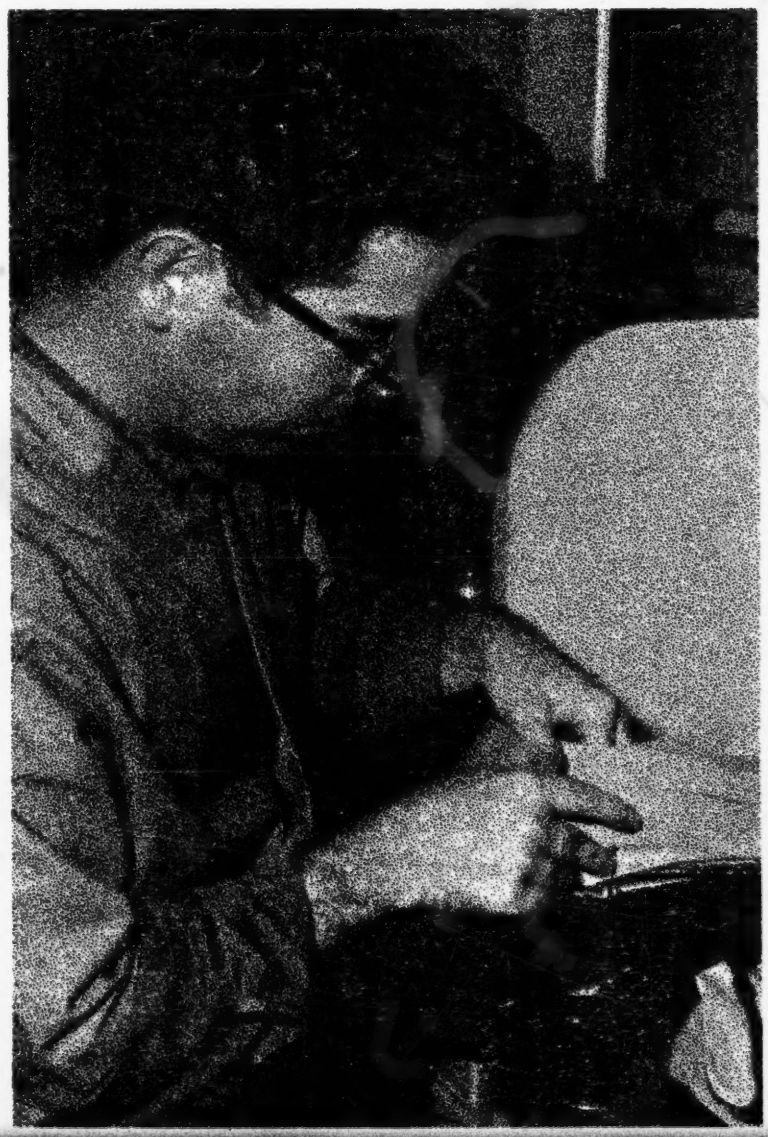

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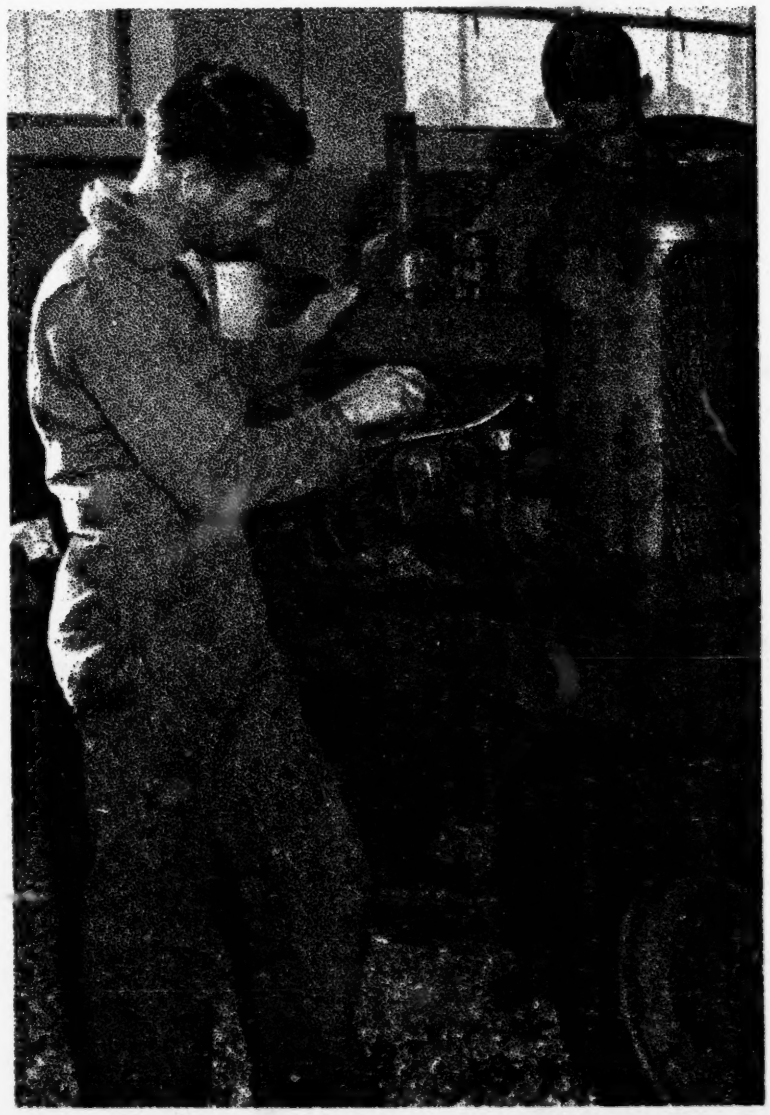

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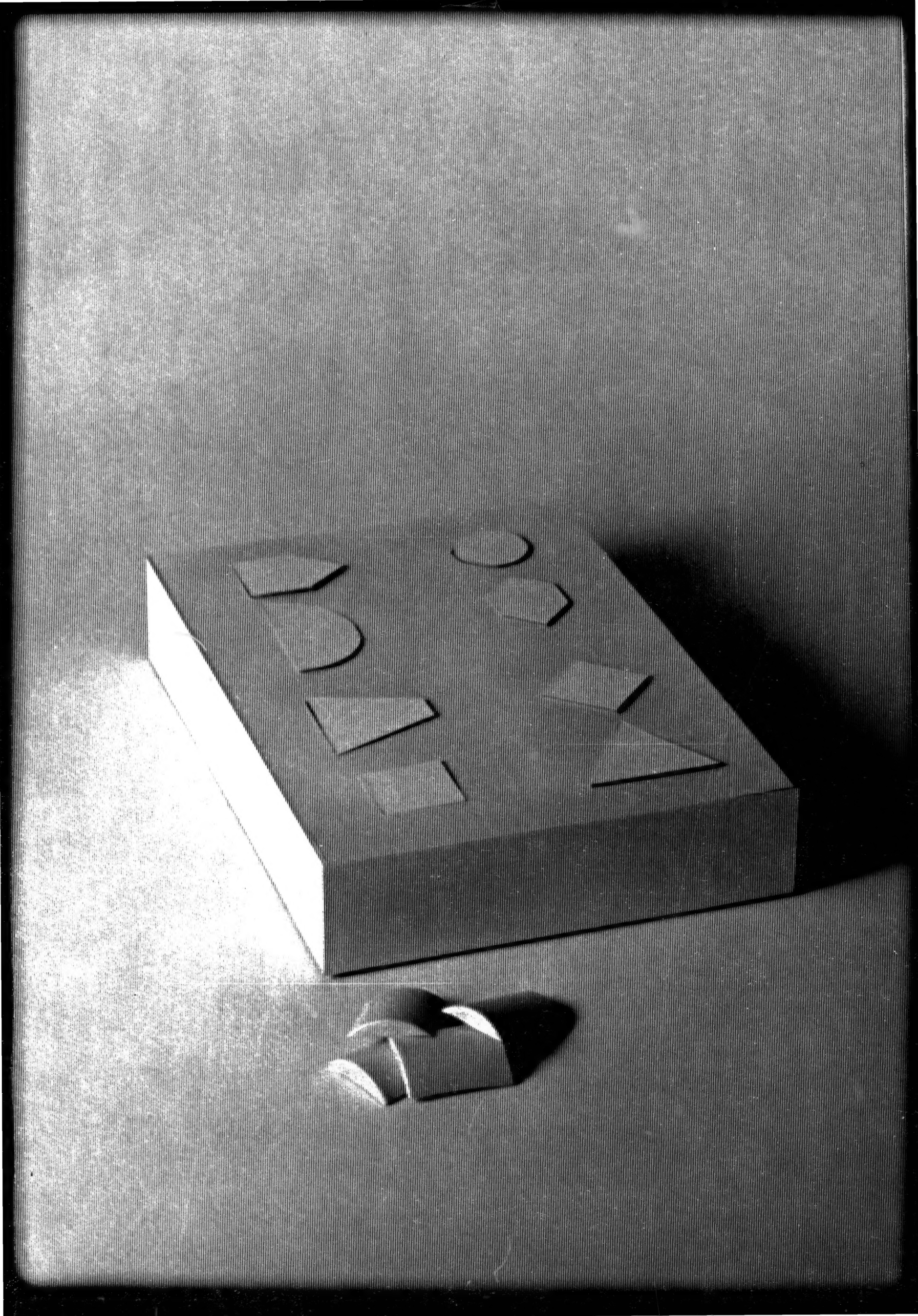
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